

THE FAR WEST DRUG METAGROUP

DRUGS, MANAGED VIOLENCE AND THE RUSSIAN 9/11

*The international
illegal drug trade
serves not only the
political and
economic
objectives of the
drug traffic but the
state itself,
including powerful
interests in the USA
and Russia.*

Part 1 of 2

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Violence and the Political Requirements of the Global Drug Traffic

In the last three decades, three important facts have emerged about the international drug traffic. The first is that it is both huge and growing.

Narcotics are estimated to be worth between [US]\$500 billion and \$1 trillion a year, an amount, according to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in remarks to a United Nations General Assembly session in June 2003, that is greater than the global oil and gas industry, and twice as large as the overall automobile industry.¹

The second is that it is both worldwide and, above all, "highly integrated".² At global drug summits, such as the one in Armenia in 1993, representatives of the Sicilian Mafia, the Brighton Beach *Organizatsiya* and Colombian drug lords have worked out a common *modus operandi*, with the laundering of dirty money entrusted chiefly to the lawless Russian banks.³

The third important fact, undeniable since the 1980 US intervention in Afghanistan, is that governments with global pretensions will avail themselves, in pursuit of their own political ends, of the resources, both financial and political, of the drug traffic. It was striking in the 1980s that the CIA, in its choice of Afghan mujahedin leaders to back against the Soviet Union, passed over those with indigenous support in favour of those—notably, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar—who dominated the heroin trade. The result was to enhance Hekmatyar's power until he became a leading heroin trafficker, not just in Afghanistan but in the world.⁴

Three more important features of the global drug traffic have been less noticed; thus, although I regard them as facts, I shall refer to them not as facts but as propositions to be tested against evidence. The first proposition is that the highly integrated drug traffic industry, in addition to serving the political ends of world powers, has its own political as well as economic objectives. It requires that in major growing areas there must be limited state control—a condition most easily reached by fostering regional rebellion and warfare, often fought by its own private armies. This is the ongoing situation of designed violence in every major growing area from Lebanon to Myanmar, Colombia to Afghanistan. All of these countries have been labelled "failing states", or (the term preferred by political scientists) "anocracies".⁵

Once the local power of drug armies was enough in itself to neutralise the imposition of state authority. But today there are increasing signs that those at the highest level of the drug traffic will plot with the leaders of major states to ensure, or even to stage, violence that serves the power of the state and the industry alike.

Thanks to extensive research in Russia, we now have initial evidence of a second and even more significant proposition: that there exists on the global level a drug meta-group, able to manipulate the resources of the drug traffic for its own political and business ends without being at risk for actual trafficking. These ends include the creation of designed violence to serve the purposes of cabals in political power—most conspicuously in the case of the Yeltsin "family" in the Kremlin, but allegedly, according to Russian sources, also for those currently in power in the United States.

One piece of evidence for this consists in a meeting which took place in July 1999 in southern France near Nice, at the villa in Beaulieu of arms merchant Adnan Khashoggi, once called "the richest man in the world". Those at the meeting included a member of the Yeltsin cabal in the Kremlin and four representatives from the meta-group, with

passports from Venezuela, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Germany. Between them they allegedly enjoyed excellent relations with:

- 1) Ayman al-Zawahiri, the acknowledged mastermind of 9/11 and senior mentor to Osama bin Laden;
- 2) Soviet military intelligence;
- 3) the FARC, the Colombian revolutionary group that has become increasingly involved in the drug traffic;
- 4) the Kosovo Liberation Army, a similarly involved group;
- 5) (according to a well-informed Russian source) the CIA.

The third important proposition is that a meta-group of this scale does not just help government agencies make history. I hope to show that its members, and its predecessors, are powerful enough to help make history themselves. However, they do not do so overtly but as a hidden "Force X" whose presence is not normally acknowledged in the polite discourse of academic political scientists. On the contrary, as we shall see, references to it are usually suppressed.

A Digression: Drugs, Meta-Groups and the Compradorial Revolution

The question arises whether this is the only such meta-group in the international drug milieu. My tentative answer is that there are indeed other focal nodes for organised international drug trafficking, often above the reach of the law. (The remnants of the dissident Hekmatyar drug network in Afghanistan would be a prime example.) What is special about this meta-group is its global reach, which makes it of especial interest to the CIA and other pro-American agencies committed to globalisation. It also has its own business front, Far West, Ltd., which has interfaced with prominent political transnational firms like Halliburton.

A drug meta-group with such broad connections is not unprecedented. As I argue elsewhere, I see an historical succession of meta-groups influencing US governmental relations to the international drug traffic. This succession reaches back, through the CIA-sponsored activities of BCCI, to what I call the first post-war meta-group: the overlapping global operations of William Donovan, E. Howard Hunt, Paul Helliwell and Meyer Lansky.⁶ If there is an historical pattern of evolution in this succession, it is that successive meta-groups have become more powerful, more highly organised and more independent of their government connections.

A clear predecessor for the Far West meta-group was the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), a drug-laundering bank which was of use to CIA Director William Casey precisely because of its corrupt global reach. As a Washington insider said to two *Time* reporters covering BCCI:

*They were the only way we could talk to certain folks, and they were the only vehicle available for some transactions. Who else could wire something together to Saudi Arabia, China, Israel, and the US?*⁷

It is worthy of note that Khashoggi has enjoyed intimate connections to both Far West and BCCI, as well as to Western intelligence and politicians. He was listed in the 1992 US Senate BCCI report as one of the "principal foreign agents of the US".^{7a}

The "wiring together" effected by drugs has helped give a significant boost to the global banking network, particularly in Russia and Southeast Asia. In these areas it has also fostered trade and investment, bringing businessmen from previous, diverse, commercial areas into increasing contact with each other. From this perspective, globalisation can be seen as a compradorial revolution: compradorial classes have moved into positions of power, and in some cases their international networks have been more than a match for local state power.⁸

As to how many drug meta-groups exist in the world, I believe there are at least two. A second, which we will not examine here, oversees the new drug highway from northern Myanmar (Burma) through the entrepreneurial zones of southern China, and manages the international connections necessary to arrange for the smuggling of heroin and people into Australia and the eastern and western United States.⁹

The relation of the West to this second or Eastern meta-group is unknown, and in all probability it is highly complex and ambiguous. It is probably safe to say, however, that the global reach of the second meta-group, overseeing the much smaller flow of drugs east from Myanmar, is less than the first or Western meta-group we shall discuss here, overseeing the far greater flow of drugs west from Afghanistan. It has been estimated that by now Afghanistan supplies 87 per cent of the global heroin trade.¹⁰

There is an undeniable Western face to the dominant meta-group. One member of the meta-group at the 1999 meeting, Anton Surikov, had spent time at the London Centre for Defence Studies; in addition, Surikov had had contacts with at least one senior CIA representative.¹¹ (Another member of the meta-group, former Lithuanian Defence Minister Audrius Butkevicius, was with Surikov at the London Centre.) We shall see that a third member, Ruslan Saidov, is said to have been paid as a CIA contract agent.

But there are much more important functional links between this meta-group and corporations close to the White House of President George W. Bush. The group's business front, Far West, Ltd, is said to have CIA-approved contractual dealings with Halliburton for geopolitical purposes in the Caucasus as well as dealings in Iraq with Diligence LLC, a group with connections to Joe Allbaugh (the FEMA chief in 2001) and to the President's younger brother Neil Bush. The head of Far West recently told a Russian outlet that "a well-known American corporation...is a co-founder of our agency".¹²

One of the alleged purposes of the meeting at the villa—but not the only one—was to give the Yeltsin "family" what it supposedly needed: a Russian 9/11.

The "Russian 9/11": Bombings and Plans for War

Russia has been familiar for some time with charges that the bombings in Moscow in September 1999, and an accompanying invasion of Russian Dagestan that rekindled the ongoing war in neighbouring Chechnya, were both planned by representatives of the Islamist element in the Chechen resistance in collusion with a representative of the Russian Kremlin.

Read synoptically, these stories indicate that the well-connected drug-trafficking meta-group, with connections to both the Kremlin and the CIA, arranged in advance for the bombings and

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invasion at the July 1999 meeting at a French villa owned by Adnan Khashoggi. The group allegedly operated with support from Saudi Arabia and organised global drug trafficking, some of it probably through Kosovo.

The evidence for this Western face of the group is laid out in an article by a so-called Yuri Yasenev, which is clearly a compilation of extracts from intelligence reports, on a Russian website [see <http://www.compromat.ru/main/surikov/saidov.htm>].¹³ The article is cited—very selectively—as authoritative by a reputable Hoover Institution scholar, John B. Dunlop [see the October 8, 2004, paper "Storm in Moscow" at http://www.sais-jhu.edu/programs/res/papers/Dunlop_paper.pdf].¹⁴

But Dunlop completely ignores—one might say, suppresses—Yasenev's case as I have summarised it above. He uses the article instead to document a more familiar case: that in 1999, the Yeltsin "family" in the Kremlin dealt with this same group to create what might be called the "Russian 9/11".

When I say that Dunlop suppresses certain details, I do not mean to suggest that he does so conspiratorially or even consciously. My notion of deep politics, which I have developed elsewhere, posits that in every culture and society there are facts which tend to be suppressed collectively because of the social and psychological costs of not doing so.¹⁵ Like all other observers, I too have involuntarily suppressed facts and even memories about the drug traffic that were too provocative to be retained with equanimity.¹⁶

The drug traffic is often the beneficiary of this suppression, which leaves it more free to act without interference. In *Deep Politics* I referred to the pervasive influence of a US government–drug collaboration which I called "Operation X", looking at it from the perspective of a parapolitical manipulation of the traffic by the government.¹⁷

I wish now that I had written of a "Force X": a force which was no longer under total government control and, indeed, could influence government behaviour for its own ends.¹⁸

Dunlop's thesis is in itself an alarming one. It is that men of influence in the Kremlin, building on the connections established by the wealthy oligarch Boris Berezovsky, were able to arrange for staged violence in order to reinforce support for an unpopular Russian government. This staged violence took the form of lethal bombings in the capital and an agreed-upon incursion by Chechens into Russian Dagestan.

This credible thesis is even more alarming when we consider that both Khashoggi and Berezovsky have purchased significant influence in the West as well. In 2003 Khashoggi was negotiating with Richard Perle, a member of the Cheney–Rumsfeld clique who at the time was still Chairman of the US Defense Policy Board, to invest considerable Saudi money in Perle's company Trirème.¹⁹ Berezovsky is a shareholder in the software company, Ignite, of President Bush's delinquent brother Neil Bush.²⁰

By the "Russian 9/11", I mean the Kremlin-approved bombings of Russian apartment buildings in 1999, along with the pre-arranged (and partly staged) invasion of Dagestan which led to the second Russian invasion of Chechnya. For some time the West has heard versions of the claim that both events were planned at the time by Russian intelligence. For example, Patrick Cockburn reported as follows in the *Independent* of January 29, 2000:

*Boris Kagarlitsky, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Comparative Politics, writing in the weekly Novaya Gazeta, says that the bombings in Moscow and elsewhere were arranged by the GRU (the Russian military intelligence service). He says they used members of a group controlled by Shirvani Basayev, brother of the Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev, to plant the bombs. These killed 300 people in Buikask, Moscow and Volgograd in September.*²¹

Western scholarly analyses have seen the bombings and war as part of a stratagem to boost the popularity of the Kremlin, and particularly the little-known new Prime Minister Putin, in preparation for the presidential elections in November 1999. The most thorough study, by John Dunlop, blames the plotting on three protégés of the Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky—Valentin Yumashev, Alexander Voloshin and Roman Abramovich—who at this point were members of Yeltsin's "family" in the Kremlin.²² (As for Berezovsky himself, Dunlop writes that by mid-1999 "all of his real but beginning-to-dwindle political influence was obtained through the intercession of D'yachenko [Yeltsin's daughter] and Yumashev".²³)

The Meeting in Khashoggi's Villa, July 1999

A crucial piece of evidence for this thesis of Kremlin-structured violence is the meeting in July 1999, when Alexander Voloshin met in southern France with the Chechen warlord Shamil' Basaev. In Dunlop's words [pp. 40-41]:

On the day following the initial incursion of rebel forces into the

Dagestani highlands in early August of 1999, the investigative weekly Versiya published a path-breaking report claiming that the head of the Russian Presidential Administration, Aleksandr Voloshin, had met secretly with the most wanted man in Russia, Shamil' Basaev, through the good offices of a retired officer in the GRU, Anton Surikov, at a villa belonging to international arms merchant Adnan Khashoggi located between Nice and Monaco.¹⁰⁹ A source in French intelligence was credited by Versiya with supplying this information. The article stirred major interest in the Russian media, but at the time documentary confirmation was lacking...

"This villa, according to the French special services, belongs to the international arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi. He is an Arab from Saudi Arabia, a billionaire with a complicated reputation. According to the French special services, and also to the French press, in June of 1999 there took up residence at the villa a Venezuelan banker named Alfonso Davidovich.¹¹¹ In the Latin

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American press, he is said to be responsible for laundering the funds of the Colombian left insurrection organization FARC, which carries out an armed struggle with the official authorities, supported by the narcotics business."

Dunlop's massively documented essay is 52 pages long, with 142 footnotes. But having thus provocatively included references to both Khashoggi and narcotics, Dunlop does not mention either again.

Khashoggi's Interest in Chechnya

Just as Berezovsky was at one point the richest man in Russia, so Khashoggi was once (according to his American biographer) "the richest man in the world". At one point, indeed, Khashoggi had an influence in American politics analogous to Berezovsky's in Russia. For example, Khashoggi attended both Nixon inaugurals and contributed money to his election campaigns. He admitted to giving \$58,000 in 1968, but allegedly told Pierre Salinger he gave \$1 million in 1972.²⁴ He also arranged a fund-raising event for Jimmy Carter's Center in Plains, Georgia—an event which probably originated from Khashoggi's and Carter's connections to the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI).²⁵

Khashoggi is usually thought of as an arms salesman. Although he has never been directly linked to the drug traffic, he was intimately involved in the affairs of the drug-money-laundering BCCI, with which he arranged an arms shipment as part of Oliver North's dealings in Iran-Contra.^{25a} He also became notorious for flying into Las Vegas from abroad and then rapidly losing vast sums of cash at the casino tables—a traditional form of money-laundering.^{25b} His name has surfaced in connection with a number of other scandals, from the illicit real estate ventures of the Marcos family in New York to a major defrauding of a Thai bank in 1998, which was followed by the Asian financial crisis.

Khashoggi had had a financial interest in Chechnya and connections with its leaders since 1996, from his participation in a consortium called Caucasian Common Market AO. This was designed to raise US\$3 billion in the West and Japan for investment in Chechnya.^{25c} A principal organiser was former Chechen First Deputy Premier Khozh-Akhmed Nukhaev, in conjunction with Lord McAlpine of the Goldsmith family interests in London and also American capital.^{25d} But according to the late Paul Klebnikov, Nukhaev had a background in Chechen organised crime before developing "a radical ideology in line with the one espoused by Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network".^{25e}

Despite this background, Nukhaev found support and financing in Washington for his Caucasian-American Chamber of Commerce. According to one source, in 1997 Khashoggi introduced Nukhaev to former US Secretary of State James Baker.^{25f} However, Dunlop's inquiry is focused not on Khashoggi but on Berezovsky and his representative Voloshin in the Kremlin [p. 45]:

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In March of 2002 Interfax reported that, through his long-time business partner Badri Patarkatsishvili, Berezovskii had "supplied Chechen figures Kazbek Makhachev and Movladi Udugov with money to purchase the raid against Dagestan. According to witnesses, Berezovskii contributed 30 million rubles for the purpose".¹²⁰ This payment, amounting to more than \$1 million, if it occurred, may have been only one of several intended to underwrite a "short victorious war" in Dagestan.

¹²⁰ "Berezovskii Sponsored Dagestan Raid, Top Policeman's Abduction—Prosecutors", Interfax, 5 March 2002. A well-known journalist for RFE-RL, Andrei Babitskii, who frequently visited Chechnya during this period and was acquainted with a number of leading separatists, writes that he can confirm that Berezovskii did indeed speak by telephone with both Basaev and Movladi Udugov at this juncture. See Andrei Babitskii, "Na voine", hro.org, 2 March 2004.

Dunlop is not alone in suspecting the hand of Berezovsky behind Voloshin's meeting with Basaev. So does Cockburn's source, Boris Kagarlitsky (about whom we shall have more to say).^{25g} The Russian observer Lilia Shevtsova reports a rumour at this time that Berezovsky himself, along with his agent Alexander Voloshin, had met in France with Basaev in the summer of 1999, just before the Dagestan invasion of August 2nd.^{25h}

Dunlop's Redactions of His Source Yasenev

Though he says nothing more about Khashoggi or drugs, Dunlop does however make one more reference to the alleged drug-money-launderer Alfonso Davidovich [pp. 42-43]:

"It soon emerged," Versiya continued, "that a very frequent visitor to Davidovich was a certain French businessman of Israeli-Soviet origin, a native of Sokhumi [Abkhazia], 53-year-old Yakov Kosman.¹¹²¹ Soon Kosman brought with him six persons who arrived via Austria carrying Turkish passports.¹²⁶¹ In one of the passports the French [authorities] identified a

certain Tsveiba, who is accused by the Tbilisi authorities of having committed genocide during the Georgia-Abkhaz conflict." All of the visitors settled into the villa for a three weeks' stay.

"Soon," the account continues, "the special services succeeded in establishing that Kosman and Tsveiba went to the Nice airport, where they met two men who had arrived from Paris. Judging from their documents, one of those who arrived was Sultan Sosnaliev, who in the years of the Georgian-Abkhaz war served as the minister of defense of Abkhazia.¹¹³¹ Second there emerged from the airport one more native of Sokhumi—Anton Surikov. According to rumors, during the years of the war in Abkhazia, he was subordinated to Sosnaliev and was responsible for questions of the organization of sabotage and was friendly with field commander Shamil' Basaev, who at that time headed the Chechen battalion."

The next arrival came by sea: "According to the precise information of the French and the Israelis, on 3 July at the port of Beaulieu a private English yacht 'Magiya' [Magic] arrived from

Malta. From it to the shore came two passengers. If one is to believe the passport information, one of the 'Englishmen' was a certain Turk, in the past an advisor to the Islamicist premier of Turkey, [Necmettin] Erbakan, a rather influential figure in the Wahhabi circles of Turkey, the Middle East, and the Caucasus.¹¹⁴ From sources in the Russian special services we learned that Mekhmet is also a close friend of the not unknown Khattab."

"The second person," the account goes on, "to the surprise of the intelligence officers, was the Chechen field commander Shamil' Basaev."

¹¹² Kosman is reported in the same 17 December 2004 issue of *compromat.ru* to live in Nice and to possess German and, possibly, Israeli citizenship.

¹¹³ On Sosnaliev as Abkhazia's defense minister, see *RFE-RL Newline*, 2 November 1993.

¹¹⁴ On Erbakan, see Shireen T. Hunter, *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), p. 365.

Dunlop's cited source for information about both Davidovich and Kosman is the article by Yuri Yasenev, "Rossiyu zhdet oranzhevaya revolytsiya" ("An Orange Revolution is in Store for Russia"), on the Russian website, *ru.compromat*.²⁷ But Dunlop has significantly edited, one must even say censored, what Yasenev wrote. In footnote 111, Dunlop says:

The article "Rossiyu zhdet oranzhevaya revolytsiya", compromat.ru, 17 December 2004, reports that Davidovich lives in Munich and enjoys both German and Venezuelan citizenship. He is also said to be personally acquainted with international arms dealer Khashoggi.

This radically curtails Yasenev's description of Davidovich: *Alfonso Davidovich (1948), Venezuelan, lives in Munich. Has German and Venezuelan citizenship.*

Speaks Spanish, English, French, German, and Russian fluently. In the 1970s went through special training in the USSR (Privol'noe, Nikolaevskaya oblast) and East Germany.

Owens companies and banks in Barbados, the Caymans and other off-shores.

Has friendly relations with Hugo Chavez, and is acquainted with Fidel Castro, Marcus Wolf and Adnan Khashoggi. Has many contacts in Colombia, including FARC. In 1999 Davidovich was alleged to have engaged in arms trafficking for guerrillas in Chiapas, Mexico, and in money laundering for the Colombian drug mafia. Finances antiglobalization movement in Europe and Latin America.

With respect to Yakov Kosman, Dunlop says in footnote 112:

Kosman is reported in the same 17 December 2004 issue of compromat.ru to live in Nice and to possess German and, possibly, Israeli citizenship.

Compare this with what Yasenev wrote:

Yakov Abramovich Kosman (b. 1946), resides

*in Nice, France. Has German and, possibly, Israeli citizenship. Involved in real estate operations and banking. Has contacts with Kosovo Albanian criminal societies in European countries. In 1997–2000 he served as financial consultant to Hashim Thaçi, the chief commander of KLA.*²⁹

Consider that [according to the *Washington Times* of May 3, 1999]:

*In 1998, the US State Department listed the KLA—formally known as the Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves, or UCK—as an international terrorist organization, saying it had bankrolled its operations with proceeds from the international heroin trade and from loans from known terrorists like Osama bin Laden.*³⁰

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The Khashoggi Villa Meeting, Drugs and Kosovo

It would appear that Davidovich and Kosman were in Khashoggi's villa to talk about more than just Chechnya, but that Dunlop did not wish to explore this possibility. For example, he acknowledges the presence of no less than four men of Abkhazian origin and/or influence at the meeting—Kosman, Tsveiba, Sosnaliev and Surikov—and yet offers no explanation whatsoever for their presence. (A glance at a map will show that Abkhazia is irrelevant to the subsequent events in Dagestan and Chechnya.)

It seems likely that a drug route was discussed by Basaev and others involving Abkhazia, which now "has become a key heroin transiting point".³¹

Its drug-trafficking importance is noted by none other than Surikov himself:

*In general then, the Chechen [drug-trafficking] group has allotted a very important place to Abkhazia in its plans... Abkhazia today is one of the most criminalised areas of the former Soviet Union.*³²



"I drink to forget the country's drug problems."

The London paper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* has written that Basaev controlled the "Abkhaz heroin road" used by the Taliban as a transit route to Europe.³³

Russian observers have pointed out that the meeting(s) in France, which took place in June and/or July 1999, came shortly after the unexpected entry of Russian troops into Kosovo. On June 11, 1999, 200 Russian troops in SFOR drove from Bosnia to Pristina and secured Slatina airport. General Wesley Clark then ordered (UK) General Sir Mike Jackson (who on June 9 had signed technical agreement for withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from Kosovo) "...to seize the airport. Jackson responded, famously, that he would not start World War Three for him."³⁴

Following two days of talks directly between Clinton and Yeltsin, the crisis was averted. Instead, there followed weeks of "protracted negotiations on Russia's role in the Kosovo peacekeeping mission".³⁵ In the end, under circumstances still not fully understood, the United States and NATO agreed that the Russians could stay.

The Russian troops finally withdrew from the airport in July 2003.³⁶ Significantly, a chart of Russian drug-trafficking prepared by one of Surikov's partners, Sergei Petrov, indicates that in 2003 Kosovo ceased to be a main point of export for Russian drugs, its place being taken by the Black Sea oil port of Novorossiysk.³⁷

Within a year of the troops' arrival, by 2000, according to DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) statistics, Afghan heroin accounted for almost 20 per cent of the heroin seized in the United States—nearly double the percentage taken four years earlier. Much of it was now distributed in America by Kosovar Albanians.³⁸ It is significant therefore that:

*The "Pristina dash" by Russian parachutists in 1999 during the Kosovo crisis (the purpose of the "dash" was to force NATO to guarantee for Russia a separate sector of responsibility in Kosovo) was organised by the head of the General Staff, Anatoly Kvashnin, and his deputy, Leonid Ivashov, without the knowledge of minister of defense Igor Sergeyev and most likely without Yeltsin's knowledge.*³⁹

Yasenev says nothing about this, but does assert that Kvashnin was the Russian Army connection of two leading drug traffickers (Vladimir Filin and Alexey Likhvintsev) in the Saidov–Surikov group.

The Role of Surikov: The Dunlop and Yasenev Versions

As we have seen, Dunlop describes Anton Surikov, the organiser of the Beaulieu meeting between Voloshin and Basaev, as "a retired officer in the GRU". He fails to quote from his source Yasenev's description of Surikov:

*Anton Victorovich Surikov (b. 1961). Presents himself as political scientist. Responsible for informational and political projects. Actively publishes in press. Some of his publications resemble ciphered directives to the elements in Russian special services **disloyal** [emphasis added] to President Vladimir Putin.*

His other articles contain political messages intended for abroad.

Surikov has contacts with Fritz Ermarth, former leading CIA analyst of the USSR and Russia, now in the Nixon Foundation...

*In 2002–03, together with Kondaurov—who represented Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Leonid Nevzlin—Surikov, with the help of Victor Vidmanov, organized financing of CPRF by YUKOS shareholders and the individuals associated with OPS [the organized criminal society] (Yakov Kosman, Nikolai Lugovskoi) to the tune of \$15 million.*⁴⁰

(Note: "CPRF" stands for Communist Party of the Russian Federation. "YUKOS" is a Russian oil company, once Khodorkovsky's.)

Boris Kagarlitsky's essay [*Novaya Gazeta*, January 24, 2000] and Yasenev's memo, taken from intelligence files, talk about

Surikov but from opposing perspectives. Kagarlitsky, a long-time dissident and foe of Putin, saw the Beaulieu meeting as the venue for Kremlin-instigated violence, designed to restore the Kremlin's popularity before the coming election. Yasenev's memo sees Surikov as part of an ongoing effort to destabilise Russia and weaken the Kremlin.

Kagarlitsky (and after him Dunlop) says almost nothing about Surikov, other than to refer to his past years with Russian military intelligence, the GRU. To quote Dunlop [pp. 44-45]:

*Kagarlitskii also notes: "During Primakov's time, Surikov worked on the staff of the government of the Russian Federation. Despite this fact, he also developed regular work relations with Voloshin's people." It seems therefore quite likely that Surikov and Voloshin were personally acquainted.*⁴¹

However, Yasenev's memo in December 2004 links Surikov not to the government or Kremlin but (through Kondaurov) to the sphere of the man who by that time had emerged as America's best friend and Putin's most powerful enemy in Russia: the oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky. (The

Kondaurov–Khodorkovsky connection is abundantly documented: both men freely admit it.)

Forbes magazine, which underwrote Klebnikov's damning account of Berezovsky, wrote on March 18, 2002, that Khodorkovsky appeared to be "the West's best friend" in Russia. According to PBS in October 2003, Khodorkovsky's firm Menatep shared business interests with the Western investment firms Global Asset Management, the Blackstone Group, the Carlyle Group and AIG Capital Partners. In addition:

*He frequently travels to the United States. He reportedly dined with Condoleezza Rice last year and recently was a guest at Herb Allen's Idaho ranch, along with Bill Gates, Warren Buffett and other luminaries, for an annual telecommunications executives meeting.*⁴²

Quoting from an anti-Yeltsin essay of May 1999 by Surikov in *Versiya*, the American right-wing Jamestown Foundation agrees with Yasenev (against Kagarlitsky and Dunlop) that "Surikov is

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clearly in the camp of Yeltsin's opponents".⁴³ More recently, Surikov has also shown himself to be anti-Putin, criticising Putin's "obvious inability...to struggle against terrorism effectively".⁴⁴

Furthermore, Surikov clearly had Western support in his opposition to government corruption under Yeltsin. The Centre for Defence Studies, a British think-tank at King's College, London, published two small books by Surikov, including one entitled *Crime in Russia: the international implications*.⁴⁵ According to his web page at the Moscow Institute of Globalization Studies (IProg) website, Surikov spent the year 1994 at the Centre for Defence Studies.⁴⁶ Audrius Butkevicius is said to have spent the year there as well.

As for Yasenev's allegation that "Surikov has contacts with Fritz Ermarth", Surikov when questioned about this admitted it frankly: "I am personally acquainted with Mr Ermarth as political scientist since 1996. It's well known by many people and we never hid this fact."⁴⁷

In saying this, Surikov was admitting to a CIA connection: Ermarth, a senior officer who twice served on the National Security Council, did not retire from the CIA until 1998. The two men had met in April 1996 at a Global International Security Seminar in Virginia.⁴⁸

Above all, Kagarlitsky is silent about the charge which has since aroused controversy in the Russian media: Surikov's supposed involvement with "a group of renegade Soviet secret service officers who are allegedly involved in international drug trafficking and have ties with Western and Saudi security apparatus".⁴⁹

It would be interesting to learn at what point Kagarlitsky first met Surikov, and whether Surikov was in fact the source for Kagarlitsky's article about the meeting in southern France. Today the two men are close, and serve together at IProg.⁵⁰

Saidov, Surikov, Muslim Insurrectionism and Drug Trafficking

The most conspicuous clue to Dunlop's selectivity in his use of the Yasenev memo is his failure to identify "Mekhmet", the "certain Turk, in the past an advisor to the Islamicist premier of Turkey, [Necmettin] Erbakan".⁵¹ Yasenev identifies Mekhmet, linking him not only to Erbakan but also to the CIA, to Saudi intelligence and to al-Qaeda:

In 2003 the Turkish citizen Mehmet, whose real name is Ruslan Saidov, persuaded the President of the Chechen Republic, Ahmed Kadyrov, that he could be of use with Kadyrov's policy of "national reconciliation".

Saidov took part in organizing Kadyrov's visit to Saudi Arabia. There Kadyrov made an agreement with the head of Saudi intelligence, Prince Naif Ibn Abdel-Aziz, that the Arab militants under the Lieutenant Colonel Aziz ben Said ben Ali al-Hamdi (alias Abu al-Walid al-Hamadi), Prince Naif's subordinate, would be removed from Chechnya by May 2004. The agreement stipulated that Kadyrov guaranteed safe passage to Abu al-Walid. Playing a double game and intending to set up both parties, Saidov (probably together with Abu al-Walid himself) gave this information to the CIA. Apparently the CIA was concerned that having left Chechnya the Arab militants would resurface in Iraq

and join the terrorist group of the Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi that belongs to the al-Qaeda network.

Trying to prevent this, and, besides, wanting to discredit Kadyrov in the eyes of Prince Naif, the CIA gave Saidov an "assignment". On April 13 in the Nozhai-Yurt district of Chechnya, Russian troops killed Abu al-Walid (or alleged having done so). Saidov paid \$300,000 to those who carried out this operation. Their bosses in Moscow received \$500,000. How much the CIA paid Saidov is unknown...

Yasenev describes Saidov as both a drug trafficker and an arms trafficker, involved with the supply of Russian arms to the Saudi-backed secessionists in Yemen. He adds that:

In the spring of 1995 Saidov began to cooperate with the organized society, led by Vladimir Filin and Alexei Likhvintsev, in handling [narcotics] traffic through the port of Novorossiysk.

Yasenev also describes Saidov as having good relations not only with the CIA but also with Turkish Islamists and even with Ayman al-Zawahiri, the man often described as both the "mastermind" behind 9/11 and the senior partner in al-Qaeda with the younger bin Laden.⁵²

In addition, Yasenev made it clear that Saidov was not pro-Putin but a Muslim activist who was passionately anti-Putin and, indeed, anti-Russian:

In September 2003, Saidov participated in the congress of the extremist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami in Jordan. At this congress he announced that Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami was an organization effectively acting in the underground throughout Russia, Central Asia and the Crimea...^[53]

On December 8, 2004, Saidov addressed Muslim youth in Moscow.

In his words, "following Ukraine, the Orange Revolution is coming to Russia". "Our liberals say that in 2008 the situation in Moscow will be like the one in Kiev. However, everything will be different, and not in 2008 but earlier. Amirs and mudjahideen will soon make the Kremlin shudder with horror." In 2005, "they will throw into hell the servant of Satan", i.e., President Putin, who is allegedly "wanted by the International Tribunal at The Hague".

The same goal of Muslim liberation was attributed by Yasenev to the organiser of the meeting in France, Anton Surikov:

On December 13, 2004, in Adygeia, Surikov had a meeting with a group of Sufi believers and said this: "In the past we were against ahl-ad-dalala [those who have gone astray] with their Arab money. We used to say that one should not separate from Russia. But now Russia is on the brink of collapse and chaos. So we'll be separating [from Russia] with all Muslims of the Caucasus. A new state will be created on our historical lands from Psou and the Black Sea to Laba and Kuban."

(The goal of splitting up Russia attributed here to Surikov is that which, in an earlier [1994] text co-authored by Surikov, is attributed by Russian "radicals" to the United States:

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The radicals believe that the US actively utilizes Turkish and Muslim elements... From Azerbaijan, radicals foresee a strategic penetration which would irrevocably split the Federation. US influence would be distributed to the former Soviet Central Asian Republics, to Chechnya and the other North Caucasus Muslim autonomous republics of T[ar]stan and Bashkortostan. As a result Russian territorial integrity would be irreparably compromised.⁵⁴)

Yasenev also claims that, in the summer of 2004, the meta-group:

...started a project in the Near-Volgian Federal District to train cadres for [the] Volga-Urals chapter of the international extremist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, banned by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation in 2003. The project is financed by private philanthropic foundations of the Arabic Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

In this context, we can further question Dunlop's assumption that the 1999 meeting

organised by Surikov in southern France was called to promote the intentions of the Yeltsin "family". In the light of the Yasenev essay, it is more likely to have served the purposes of militant Islam and the drug traffic.

The portraits of Saidov's and Surikov's connections with al-Zawahiri, Erbakan and Hizb ut-Tahrir confirm the criticisms by the Indian analyst B. Raman and others that American studies of Islamist jihadism err in their restrictive focus on al-Qaeda.⁵⁵

The full range of Islamic jihadism is far more complex.

In my conclusion, I'll return to the possibility that the US government may share common goals with Hizb ut-Tahrir and the meta-group in Russia, even while combatting the Islamist terrorism of al-Qaeda in the Middle East and the West.

Continued next issue...

Editor's Note:

We are unable to publish the accompanying endnotes due to their extensive nature and our lack of space.

This article has been abridged for a 2006 colloquium presentation by Dr

Scott at the University of Melbourne.

A longer form of this essay, together with endnotes, can be found at <http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/articles/global-drug.htm>.

About the Author:

Dr Peter Dale Scott, a former Canadian diplomat, has written extensively on US foreign policy and the international drug traffic.

He has recently completed a book manuscript, *The Road to 9/11: Wealth, Empire, and the Future of America*. His most recently published book is *Drugs, Oil, and War: The United States in Afghanistan, Colombia, and Indochina* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

For additional background, see "A Ballad of Drugs and 9/11", *FlashPoint*, Spring 2006, at <http://www.flashpointmag.com/scott2.htm>. Dr Scott's article "Al-Qaeda, US Oil Companies and Central Asia" was published in NEXUS 13/03.

For more details about Dr Scott and his work, visit his website <http://www.peterdalescott.net>.